

preference in Britain and sell their surplus at the lower world price in foreign countries. But to suggest this as a means to Empire unity is just a bad joke. It means that Canadian and Australian farmers would exploit a monopoly given them by Britain in order to dump abroad; the British consumer in the name of Empire would pay more for his food in order that foreigners might get it cheaper than he did. The Dominion Premiers cannot mean this. But unless they mean this, they can get nothing by preference on wheat. What *do* they mean? They have said themselves that preference must be based on mutual advantage.

Wheat is outside the limits within which preference can work to mutual advantage. So for the same reason is wool. So for other reasons is maize. So are gold and diamonds. On any serious consideration, however sympathetic, one article after another goes out. They do not all go out. There are some new articles on which preferences might work at least as well as on the present articles, and there is one Dominion—New Zealand—with which a good deal more might be done than with the rest. But it all comes to very little in the end. And if one studies the question, not article by article, but in general terms, one gets the same result. As a possible economic unit, the British Empire has no likeness at all to the United States of America, either geographically or historically. Geographically its constituents are separated, not together. Historically its constituents, on their economic side, have grown up separately, not together. Some of the major economic interests of Britain and the Dominions now lie leagues apart. . . .

Their interest in high protection for their industries blocks the way. The fiscal policy of the Dominions is one of keeping out all goods, whether from Britain or elsewhere, which they can make themselves. They do not propose to lower any tariffs for us, but only to raise still more some of their tariffs against foreign countries. They do not even promise not to raise tariffs further against us. Indeed they tell us frankly that they will raise tariffs and shut us out still more as they develop their industries still further. The protective policy of the Dominions more than anything else narrows the scope for Imperial Preference. If and when they freely change that policy, the scope for Imperial Preference will be widened, and I, for one, will welcome this. Till then there is little doing.

And even then one last danger will lurk in all Imperial bargaining about trade. If trade grows naturally between countries, if it can be fostered by general measures such as research and spread of information and ease of transport, then good feeling grows naturally with it. But if trade has to rest on Government bargains there is as much chance of bad feeling as of good feeling. Suppose that the prosperity of Canada comes to depend on the price fixed for wheat by a Government Import Board in Britain, or the prosperity of New Zealand on the height of a British tax on meat from South America. Frankly, as a Britisher who values the Empire, I am a little frightened at the prospect. . . .

The only likeness to a Crusade that one can see in Lord Beaverbrook's campaign is that it would have fitted much better into an earlier century than it does into this one. It is just trying to put back Big Ben.

**UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LAND**

By W. R. Lester, M.A.

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**AGRICULTURE AND PROTECTION**

**A Tenant Farmer's Views**

(Capt. A. R. McDougal's speeches in pamphlet form.)

A great service to the cause of Free Trade has been rendered by Capt. A. R. McDougal, of Blythe, Lauder (Scotland), in publishing in pamphlet form his statement exposing the fallacies of Protection, with which he has impressed many audiences and many newspaper readers during the past year. In this campaign he has gathered force, and no one speaks with more authority or with more radical conviction among the ranks of farmers who are taking public part in the controversy. Out of his notes for the platform and the kind of questions put to him by his audiences, Capt. McDougal has made of this pamphlet a first-class propagandist document. The objections stated, the grievances explored, the contentions urged, that cheap imports hurt agriculture, are presented and answered in a happy conversational style so that the reader is made to feel he is a member of a company of farmers who are having a heart-to-heart discussion on fiscal policy as it affects them.

Capt. McDougal, as a "plain, practical tenant-farmer of 30 years' experience," addressed a Glasgow Free Trade Conference on 21st November. The pamphlet is printed as a report of that address. It also puts on record for the education, we hope, of a much wider public the lesson already taught on many a platform since Capt. McDougal made his notable statement at our International Conference in Edinburgh, 1929.\*

Having disposed of all the pleas for Protection, Capt. McDougal goes to the root of the matter in relating Free Trade to agriculture and the land question:—

"The lasting and permanent solution of our farming troubles is not to be found in doles and tariffs, but in the reform of our antiquated and harmful system of land tenure. . . . The broad issue is clear. It is simply whether the present low food prices must be raised to bolster high rents, or whether rents must come down to meet low food prices—dear land and dear food *versus* cheap land and cheap food.

"Who will benefit from Protection?—the land-owner alone. Who will pay for it?—the taxpayer and consumer. Who will suffer most by it?—the tenant-farmer.

"Freed from landlordism we can compete with anyone. Shackled by landlordism, antiquated leases and sporting rights, we must inevitably remain a depressed industry."

The final word in what the author advocates as best for farming and the State is Free Trade, immediate reduction of rent, land tenure reform, the taxation of land values and the removal of rates and taxes from improvements. And this is emphasized.

*There must be a definite statement that on no account will agriculture or any other industry receive any State financial aid or unfair remission of rates or taxes.*

The new pamphlet, *Agriculture and Protection: Its Fallacies*, is printed by A. Walker & Sons, Galashiels. Copies may be obtained for the cost of postage (1d.) from our offices. It is an outstanding contribution to the literature on the subject and a guide of the greatest value to any platform speaker. A. W. M.

\* See the United Committee's pamphlet, *Agriculture and Land Value Taxation* (price 1d.), being the papers presented at the Edinburgh International Conference by F. C. R. Douglas, M.A., Capt. A. R. McDougal, and James Scott M.P.